RNA FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THE HEIGHTS

RIVERVIEW Neighborhood Association

OCTOBER, 1989 *232 Ogden Avenue - Jersey City, N.J. 07307 - (201) 798-0493*

RNA IS NOT AFFILIATED WITH ANY POLITICAL PARTY, ORGANIZATION OR ELECTED OFFICIAL

MEETING MINUTES:

Our September meeting was a marvelous success. As advertised, RNA had two guest speakers.- the newly-elected councilmen of Wards C and D: Joseph Rakowski and Dan Waddleton.

The meeting room was full with people: long-time members and many new neighborhood residents came to meet and hear their elected representatives. Mr. Waddleton and Mr. Rakowski spoke separately, and each said they would do their best to address the neighborhood's concerns.

As usual, the audience had some tough questions for the quest speakers. The questions concentrated on the following problems:

1) the increase of drug sales in the area,
2) the rash of recent auto break-ins,
3) gangs of teens congregating on the local street corners,
4) a noticeable Police absence in our neighborhood,
5) poor response time when the Police are called,
6) indifferent landlords , or absentee property owners that do not take care of their property or tenants,
7) the continuing problem of people that dump garbage on our streets and sidewalks,
8) the inadequate level of city services, especially the Sanitation Dep't.'s pick-up service, and
9) the need to clean up the streets and sidewalks of Palisade Avenue.

These were just some of the topics that the Councilmen were asked to look into. RNA will be looking forward to hearing from Mr. Waddleton and Mr. Rakowski in the near future, and of observing their progress in resolving these matters.

Another quest was Ed Connelly, of the Jersey City Coalition for Fair Taxation, who was on hand to explain this year's tax increase and to give advice about how to conduct your tax appeal. Ed had a lot of practical information to give to our members who are considering appealing their tax assessments.

RNA is looking forward to seeing all our members, friends and neighbors at our next meeting on Tuesday, October 10th at 7:30 P.M. As usual, it will be held on the second floor of the Harbor View Health Care Center. We hope that you can join us there in our continuing struggle to keep our quality of life on the upward swing.

CONDOLENCES

RNA is sad to report the passing of a dear friend and colleague, Mrs. Rose Healey. Mrs. Healey was an RNA member since its inception and was extremely active. She was very concerned with her neighborhood, rarely missed a meeting, and was always ready to lend a helping hand.

Mrs. Healey will be greatly missed by her fellow members and by her many neighborhood friends. Our heartfelt sympathy goes to the Healey family. We share their loss. In honor of her memory, RNA would like to dedicate this month's issue of our newsletter to her. Mrs. Healey - thank you and good-bye.

A GET WELL WISH

A recent bus accident at the Lincoln Tunnel has left a neighborhood business man in serious condition. Mr. Michael Morgese, owner of the 3-Brothers grocery store on Palisade Avenue and Cuneo Place, was severely injured in the bus accident and is in need of our support. Please say a prayer for his speedy recovery and a card of cheer will be a marvelous panacea. You can address your cards or letters to:

Mr. Michael Morgese
c/o 3-Brothers Store
296 Palisade Avenue
Jersey City, N.J. 07307

Coming Events

RNA MEETING: OCTOBER 10, 1989

7:30 p.m. in the Harborview Health Care Center

GUESTS:

Mayor Gerald McCann

State Assemblymen Bernard Kenny, Jr. and Robert Menendez of the 33rd District

THE PRELIMINARY STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

On August 16th and September 28th, the Hudson County Planning Board held public hearings in Harrison and West New York to give interested parties an opportunity to voice their concerns regarding the new State Plan proposals. The purpose of this State Plan is to provide "a coordinated, integrated and comprehensive plan for the growth, development, renewal and conservation of the State and its regions." (The State Planning Act of 1985 created the State Planning Commission, which has primary responsibility for the preparation and adoption of a State Development and Redevelopment Plan.)

Since July 6, 1989, the Hudson County Planning Board has been conducting a "cross acceptance process", to solicit input and guidance from all twelve of the municipalities in the County: in order to compare the master plans and zoning ordinances of each community with the goals and objectives of the State Plan.

One of the most important aspects of this preliminary State Plan is the New Jersey Growth Management System which divides the state into seven tiers. Tiers are numbered 1 through 7, ranging from older cities and suburbs through environmentally sensitive rural areas. The overwhelming majority of Hudson County has been placed within Tier 1 designation. "The following describes the general intent of each tier as it functions as part of the statewide system:

TIER 1 is comprised on the most distressed cities and suburbs. The massive investment in underused and deteriorating public facilities and services make this tier where future growth would be most desirable.

TIER 2 includes the less distressed communities and the established, but still growing, suburbs that generally surround Tier 1.

TIER 3 includes the more isolated, or "freestanding", towns in suburban and rural areas that contain extensive networks of public services.

TIER 4 consists of new suburban areas that have grown out from tiers 2 and 3, generally along major transportation routes.

TIER 5 includes areas that lack basic public services, particularly sewers. While these areas may develop for urban uses in the future, any development should be managed so as to be serviced efficiently.

TIER 6 includes the best agricultural land in the State. Development intensities here must be carefully managed to assure the viability of the State's agricultural industry in the future.

TIER 7 consists largely of undeveloped areas where development densities must be carefully managed to protect environmentally sensitive features and irreplaceable natural resources.

In summary, the Plan encourages growth to occur in tiers 1 through 4 in locations where the infrastructure capacity exists, or is planned, to support it. It seeks to organize future growth occurring in tiers 5 through 7 so that new infrastructure needs will be minimized and natural resources will not be impaired. The tiers are mapped on the basis of certain existing conditions. These conditions relate to:

-municipal distress,

-present and future availability of public services, and

-sensitivity of natural resources."

(source: State Development & Redevelopment Plan, Vol. 1)

At the September 28th public hearing, in Harrison, Helen Manogue, of the Waterfront Coalition of Hudson and Bergen presented these comments to the panel. (RNA is an active member of the Waterfront Coaltition and supports this position paper):

"Growth management" appears to be currently the most fashionable word in planning circles. My understanding of the word is that it means to control development while still providing for continuing economic growth. It sounds wonderful; we all agree with the idea. The problem becomes how to do it. From recent reports of hearings and public comment, the preponderance of comment seems to urge that sprawl be stopped. And in order to stop sprawl, while continuing the economic growth we all want, another new phrase has become fashionable" "revitalize the urban areas of the State". For those of us who live in those urban areas, there is good news and bad news.

The good news is that we "might" get state aid to repair ancient sewers, upgrade sewerage plants. We "might" get improved roads, we might get better mass transit, we might get a reduction in local taxes, we might get more affordable housing. What we need to make the State Plan really good news is commitments from the State.

Then there is the bad news. As a group which represents people in the urban centers of the Hudson River waterfront communities, let us share with you our experiences of what revitalization of urban centers means in the real world.

Our area, unlike Camden, Newark, Elizabeth and other "urban centers" has been the focus of "revitalization for a number of years. We are on the cutting edge of the put-it-in-the-cities, save-the-quality-of-life-in-the-rest-of-the-state syndrome. And revitalization is not all bad, we must admit. Seventy and hundred year old buildings are being rehabed. The census shows a dramatic decline in substandard units as well as an actual increase in the number of housing units. However, the rehabed units are costly from a monetary standpoint as well as a social one. To create the rehab, displacement has occurred and continues to occur. To create the new units, many old six room apartments have become three room units renting for double and even triple the former six room rents.....Condo conversion has also become the rage.

The return of the middle class to the cities of Hudson County has been welcomed, but as the average income goes up, state aid to schools and other state programs goes down and even out, thereby placing incredible burdens on the residents. When many of the larger projects being proposed, are finally constructed, they are unable to obtain sewer hook ups due to inadequate sewerage treatment. The point here is that

the increased ratables from "revitalization", the creation of jobs, relief fro local residents from ever increasing tax burdens does not materialize from all this growth.

In addition, as the long term, less affluent move out, the more fortunate move in: bringing cars which have created parking problems rivalled only by the parking woes of Manhattan. In many Hudson County communities, it is not unusual to have traffic congestion at 1:00 P.M. in the afternoon such that fire apparatus cannot get through the streets.

Yet these old cities, many planned and laid out in the days of the horse and buggy, when people could walk to work, are now being targeted as the urban centers where the State of New Jersey is being advised to place much of its future growth.

We can all talk glowingly about ensuring a high quality of life in the State of New Jersey, but it would appear from the documents promulgated by the State Planning Commission that the urban centers will not be able to partake of that high quality if there is not a full realization now of what growth management really means, and what the quid pro quo in prime urban areas, such as Hudson, must be.

To stop sprawl, to save open space, to continue the quarter acre zoning in the suburbs and to "put it in the cities", everyone in New Jersey is going to have to participate. The State cannot expect the urban centers to go it alone in the vague hope that revitalization will pay off.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. First and foremost, the State Planning Commission must recognize that not all urban centers are the same....Perhaps certain areas of the county may be eligible for Tier 1 designation, but by no means is the entire county. In fact, so unique, so far along in revitalization is the county of Hudson, that the Waterfront Coalition is urging that a new Tier be created that of Tier 1A. All of Hudson and Bergen counties facing onto the Hudson River, New York Bay and the Hackensack River should be placed in this Tier. It should carry all of the consideration being given to Tier 2 while understanding the age of the area. Areas of Jersey City and Union City could still be classified as Tier 1, but the major portion of the county should be Tier 1A.

2. Regional consortia are recommended for counties and municipalities in "major development centers." Why were they not recommended for Tier 1? If any area needs regional planning it is the Hudson, Bergen Essex areas. Another aspect for the Tier 1A implementation. And another point, it may have been politic to exclude the Hackensack Meadowlands from the purview of the State Plan, bot it is not realistic or practical. The development of the Meadowlands has impacted the entire area. It must be added to Tier 1A areas.

3. Natural areas such as critical slopes, scenic corridors and historic areas seem to have been relegated to the suburbs and farmlands. Yet Hudson and Bergen Counties have some of the most scenic corridors, critical slopes and historic places of anywhere in the state. The State Plan urges that environmentally sensitive areas be low density and preserved. But it does not list the Palisades as scenic quality areas; they should be. So should Castle Point in Hoboken. In fact, the entire Hudson River Walkway, now mandated by the state should be designated as Tier 7 areas; as well as the face of the Palisades and the are 50 feet from the base of those cliffs.

4. For the new Tier 1A, every large scale development, (i.e. 75 units or over) in any growth area, should be subjected to review for impact on regional sewerage, garbage disposal, road systems, parking and mass transit. Studies should be required to be paid for by the developers and performed by independent or city agencies with aid from the state to insure expert planning.

5. Sequenced development means that development could not occur until appropriate mass transit and roads are available to accommodate the onslaught. Tier 1A should require sequenced development. Not to do this is to program declining quality of life, but even more important it seems to planners, the demise of economic growth.

6. The State must commit itself to reconstruct outdated and inadequate infrastructure. It should agree to pay at least 2/3 of the cost for sewerage improvements or replacements, the upgrade of sewerage treatment plants to secondary level, garbage disposal sites, road improvements and improved mass transit.

7. The Municipal Land Use Law should mandate that projects in excess of 100 units (or a comparable square footage of commercial space) must provide public, not common, outdoor space: to be maintained by the developer. Local zoning and planning boards do not have the courage to demand such things from developers unless it its mandated by the State. The Hudson River Walkway is a perfect example.....The Walkway should not only be Tier 7 but should be open to be public (this provision should be part of the deed and prospectus of all waterfront property).

It is quite disappointing to see that the State Planning Board's focus appears to be trying to take the development pressures off of everywhere but the urban areas. In this day and age, you can't just put it in the cities as was done years ago. we in the urban centers need clean air, less noise, and less congestion. We need to have someone be aware of the fact that we have certain capacities which need to be honored. We can't take everything. Especially in Hudson County. Make us Tier 1A and let us live and breathe for a while longer.

(If anyone is interested in submitting their comments or ideas about this State Plan, written responses will be accepted until November 1, 1989. They should be sent to the Hudson County Planning Board, c/o Department of Planning and Economic Development, 583 Newark Avenue, Jersey City, N.J., 07306. The telephone number is 795-6200.)

LETTERS

To RNA Members and Staff:

Keep up your excellent civic and community interest.

ARTHUR FABIAN

(RNA welcomes all comments and letters from its members and friends.)

PERSHING PLAZA:

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Dear Councilmen Rakowski and Waddleton,

At the Council meeting of September 27, 1989, you will consider adoption of an ordinance which will, if passed, change the name of Pershing Plaza". I write to you because of the fact that this street is a border street for both Ward C and Ward D.

I strongly oppose this legislation and respectfully ask that you vote in opposition to the name change. Please allow me to state my reasons for opposition.

The purpose for changing the name is to accommodate the Pershing Corporation, a division of Donaldson, Lufkin, and Jenrette. This is a corporation which has moved into the new building commonly called the "Cali Building" and which is located on Grove Street at Columbus Drive. They already are using the address of 1 Pershing Plaza. They also have applied for and, apparently, been given their own private zip code, different from all of the surrounding area.

My first basis of opposition is that it is counterproductive to rename an existing street and then give that same name to some other street. That provides for confusion and for unnecessary adjustment, physical and mental, to a street and address already familiar to city residents.

My second point of opposition is that I believe that the existing site and name "deserves" to retain its identity and that the "new kid in town" shall adjust to the scenario into which it chose to relocate.

I am pleased with the Cali Building, although I am strongly aware of the many already well known facts of negative activity concerning the building's violations of planning guidelines, et cetera. And I welcome both the entity and the people of Pershing. However, I am deeply concerned with their intention of moving into our city and wanting to make such drastic changes immediately.

I don't want to infringe on anyone's rights to do or say. However, why cannot people move into our city and adjust to our city rather than the other way around? Their very presence and the quality of that presence will make changes for the better for our city. I don't agree that there are any other changes necessary, especially when it upsets the existing street name of Pershing Plaza.

And, more importantly, this was not even stated as the reason for the name change. It was stated that we were going to name a street to honor former Mayor Thomas Gangemi.Well, I could not agree more with the honoring of this man who was a man of example and friendship, of love for this city and quality of self. However, I think that we should have named something in his honor long before now. He left a legacy and a family which serve this City well to this day and will for many long years to come. And I believe strongly that to name a street for his honor in order to accommodate a newly arrived company's self interest does great disservice to the memory and family of a man whom we should, in fact, be giving honor.

Please consider either the defeat of this ordinance or the tabling of the ordinance until such time as appropriate action may be taken. This subtle kind of activity is often foisted upon the Council in the form of an honor for someone when the reality is self service.

Thomas Hart

September 15, 1989

Veterans, block groups and citizens of Jersey City, please be advised to a proposed name change that will come up for a vote on October 10, 19089 in City Hall, 280 Grove Street. The 7:00 P.M. meeting has the ordinance MCC-35 on the agenda, this proposal would change the present Pershing Plaza, the roadway south of Pershing Field, to Thomas Gangemi, Sr. Drive. In light of the fact that the entire park is a memorial to General "Blackjack" Pershing and the area a living legacy to the men and women who gave us the ultimate sacrifice, we feel such a radical name change is wrong in tis area. We feel any name change should include a continued dedication to our veterans.

On October 6, 1989 at 7:00, in the Pershing Field Community House, the Pershing Filed Neighborhood Association will meet to discuss this situation and proposed name change.

Louis De Stefano
Acting Corresponding Secretary
Pershing Field Neighborhood Association

September 28, 1989

FOOD AND TOY DRIVES:

It is never to soon to think about helping the unfortunate in our area. RNA is again conducting a food and toy drive for the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. Members can start to bring any donations to the October meeting. The food drive donations should consist of dry or canned foods only. The toy drive donations can be either new or used toys, BUT they must be in good working condition. RNA will also accept money contributions, which will be used to purchase food and toys. For more information, or people interested in volunteering their time to this project, call 659-2245 after 6 P.M.

DUES

If you have not paid your 1989 RNA memberhsip dues, please send a check, or money order, for $3.00 , to RNA, 232 Ogden Avenue, Jersey City, N.J., 07307; or bring it to our next meeting.

N.J. TRANSIT'S HUDSON RIVER WATERFRONT TRANSPORATION PLAN

In Jersey City, on September 12th, NJ Transit began a series of public hearings to present a waterfront transportation plan and hear comments on these proposals and suggestions for improvements from citizens. "The Waterfront Transportation Office is to provide improvements in support of the developing waterfront on both a short and long term basis. The work is guided by a set of planning principles. The principles dictate that public transportation be the primary mode of transportation for the waterfront commuters. It must be quick, environmentally sensitive, highly reliable and comfortable and in place before auto-dependent travel patterns develop. Any new system must serve both Waterfront developments and trans-Hudson commuters, and must link with existing transit such as PATH, Hoboken Terminal, and existing bus routes. Automobile access to the Waterfront will not be encouraged, but highway improvements which do not foster increased trans-Hudson traffic will be made to serve new developments and reduce traffic impact on local streets and arterial roads." The six alternatives that were presented were the following:

a) no-build/do nothing: utilizing existing transportation facilities ands improvements already committed for implementation,

b) transportation systems management: insuring maximum performance from existing facilities with no major investments,

c) all-busway: developing an all-busway system to separate buses from other traffic,

d) 1987 conceptual engineering plan: constructing a light rail system, busway and Waterfront Boulevard,

e) automated people mover: constructing a fully automated elevated system (monorail), and

f) highway investments: constructing more roads for the Waterfront instead of a transit system.

Of particular interest to RNA, is the plan to relocate the Conrail freight operations which presently run on the River Line (which is the rail line directly below the Palisades and our neighborhood) to a parallel route west of the Palisades. Plans are then to build either a buslane, light rail or a monorail on the River Line.

At the hearing, Ted Conrad urged that a new system doesn't need to be built because the solution lies in reactivating many of the old railway lines in the county. (A full explanation of the Conrad plan was printed in the September, 1989 RNA newsletter.) Vito Brunetti offered the following suggestions:

1. the overriding concerns should be to minimize air pollution and maximize mass transit,

2. the area does not need additional bus or car traffic

3. the inner city and older communities should not be sacrificed for the new waterfront projects,

4. the public needs to know what the cost to the taxpayer will be,

5. NJ Transit should investigate Conrad's proposals for using the existing Conrail lines as a residential service before any new system is considered and utilizing the existing Palisade tunnel before any new cut is made in the cliff, and

6. any system should be sensitive to the Palisade cliffs and not destroy them for the sake of out-of-town commuters.

HEIGHTS COALITION OF NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS

On September 20th, several neighborhood and block associations met in the Pershing Field Community Center for the purpose of forming a coalition of Heights community groups. The different groups felt that there were enough common issues to create an organization representing all the Heights.It's purpose would be to get better representation and quicker solutions to our problems. Some of the issues discussed were: drugs, crime, taxes, overdevelopment (Christ Hospital, the Reservoirs, and the Tonnelle Avenue motels), transportation (including traffic and parking), litter and sanitation, police effectiveness and zoning (the new master plan). The first concerns were what the borders of the organization would be and the need to draw up a constitution to govern the group. The well-established D.C.N.A. (Downtown Coalition of Neighborhood Associations) provided their by-laws as an example for us to work with. They have also offered to help us by having representatives come and speak to us at our next meeting on October 30th.

The following is an excerpt of the D.C.N.A.'s purpose:

"We, community leaders of the Downtown district of Jersey City, have joined together to form the Downtown Coalition of Neighborhood Associations to use the combined strength of our respective Associations to:

a) present a united front on civic and community concerns that affect the quality of life in the ?Downtown neighborhoods;

b) continue the betterment of our individual neighborhoods;

c) encourage the formation of more neighborhood associations in the Downtown district; and

d) promote harmony and understanding among all residents."

F.A.C.T. :

FAMILES OF ADDICTED CHILDREN TODAY

Why? Why doesn't a community, the size of Hudson County, have a Re-hab facility for substance abusers? There is an absolute crying need for it!

The Invasion of drugs into this area is of plague proportions. Published statistics are frightening. Are the local authorities wearing blinders or are they sticking their heads in the sand hoping the problem will evaporate? That is not going to happen! (Ask anyone involved with drug or alcohol programs!) Whenever the problem is addressed, there is a lot of rhetoric but no concrete action is taken to alleviate the situation.

If the area experienced a health epidemic, flooding, an earthquake or some other disaster- Federal, State, County and City representatives would declare a State of Emergency and every conceivable type of aid would be mobilized and set into motion. Isn't the physical and mental afflictions of this generations substance abusers a health epidemic? Aren't our youth worth saving?

The daily frustrations met by drug programs, trying to place indigent clients, are disheartening. At the present time, out-of-County Re-habs are not accepting anyone from Hudson County who doesn't have hospitalization. Persons with insurance are not much better off. When the 28 days or 45 days of coverage are expended, it's "READY OR NOT" you are discharged. The average family cannot afford the cost of private, long term, Rehab which is a "must" for Recovery. The abuser needs to be away from his or her normal environment, for an extended period of time, in order for Recovery to be successful. Thrown back into the same influences, too soon, can only lead to Relapse.

It isn't as though there aren't any buildings available for use. Look at the amount of unused space in the Medical Center and Meadowview Hospital. Why can't an objective view be taken of these structures for possible utilization for indigent clients. And the necessary outfitting and staffing done by the County Administration?

A vocally outraged community can be an effective one! Families who know the heartache and pain of seeing their children released to an environment they are not ready for, should be making their local officials aware of the need for facilities that do a COMPLETE Rehabilitation.

It is lives we are trying to save! Give the community the proper antidote for this evil poison: a Rehab and a professional staff.

Pleas of this nature have been made before by concerned citizens but, to date, have fallen on deaf ears.

RITA M. LATTUCCA
Public Relations
F.A.C.T. Inc.
(For more information, please contact F.A.C.T. at 477 Central Avenue, Jersey City, N.J. 07307 or call 653-9432.)

RECYCLE YOUR PLASTICS.....PLEASE!

I am in receipt of your September '89 "NEWSLETTER", and have read the article "PLASTICS, PLASTICS, EVERYWHERE." Again, the RNA has beat the City to the punch, in addressing a topic which is both timely, and long overdue. The J.C.I.A. had intended to source seperate plastics since recycling began, but lacked an efficient and simple method of collection.

I am pleased to announce that we have found a market which will accept both P.E.T. (Polyethylene Terephalate) and H.D.P.E. (High Density Polyethylene) co-mingled with other recyclable items. Plastics account for 7 1/2 to 9 1/2 % of the solid waste stream and an even greater volume of landfill space.

Effective immediately, you may place plastic containers out for collection on recycling day. They may be mixed in with glass, aluminum, and tin. However, it is important to remove the caps and rinse the plastic containers, since many at one time contained products which may be harmful.

As always the JCIA is available to address your group, or any other Association to discuss our programs and any problems you may encounter.

Very truly yours,
Thomas J. Killeen
Recycling Director
Clean Communities Coordinator
Jersey City Incinerator Authority
501 Route 440
Jersey City, New Jersey 07305
(201) 432-4645

Meet "Recycle Pete"—the newest member of the Recycling Team. PETE's short for PET—Polyethylene Terephthalate—commonly recognized as plastic soft drink bottles.

Jersey City is now accepting PET for recycling. Just co-mingle PET—no caps, please—with cans and glass bottles.

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For more information, Call the Recycling Hotline at 432-4645.

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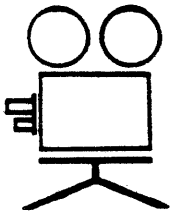

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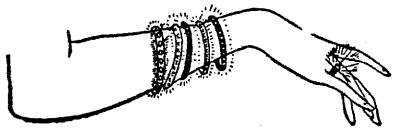

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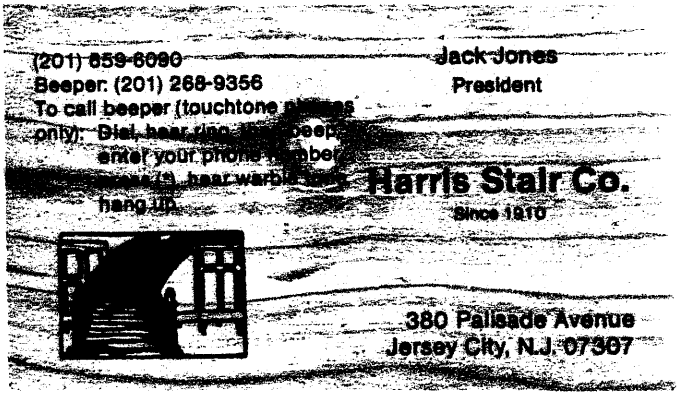

RIVERVIEW NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

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RNA SAYS: IT PAYS TO ADVERTISE!

This month inaugurates the beginning of our local businesses advertising in the RNA newsletter. RNA hopes that this will open up a meaningful dialogue with this important segment of our community. We hope that these business people join RNA and become active members to help combat our neighborhood's problems and help in our mission to better the our quality of life. A copy of the advertising contract is printed here for any businesses interested in joining the RNA effort.

NEWSLETTER STAFF

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HUDSON COUNTY NARCOTIC TASK FORCE NEEDS YOU!

YOU can make a difference in the war on drugs
YOU may have information that can help us
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Your information will be kept CONFIDENTIAL. It can be ANONYMOUS.
PAUL M. DE PASCALE
HUDSON COUNTY PROSECUTOR

LAST BUT NOT LEAST

The Newsletter Staff would like to wish Alice Soto well in her new venture. Alice has decided to go back to school to get a degree in Nursing. We will miss Alice very much both on this staff and in our neighborhood but want to wish her all the best. Good Luck!

FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THE HEIGHTS

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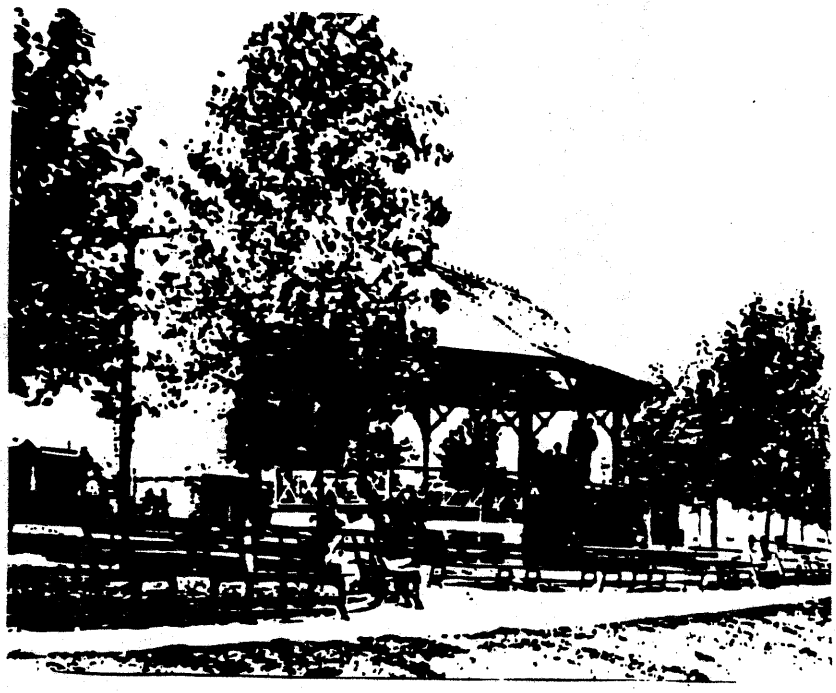
ENVIRONMENT
Ann Hart